



# SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



## *Procedure 613 – Carrying Weapons on Airport Property*

Office with Primary Responsibility:	COP	Effective Date:	July 31, 2010
		Prior Revision Date:	October 01, 2009
Office(s) with Secondary Responsibilities:	PSC, PNC, TSC, FTC, IDC, SSO	Number of Pages:	3
Forms Referenced in Procedure:	None	Related Procedures:	None

### **.01 INTRODUCTION**

- A. This procedure provides direction for the carrying of weapons by sworn members while within the passenger boarding area of the San Antonio International Airport and on commercial aircraft as a passenger
- B. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has the sole authority to allow officers into the secure area of the Terminal based upon successful screening, authorized escort, or a pre-arranged law enforcement officer adhering to the defined policy and procedure for flying armed.
- C. This procedure is predicated by existing Transportation Security Administration (TSA) regulations and 49 CFR 1554.219 “Carriage of Accessible Weapons” for Law Enforcement Officers (LEO) who have the need to fly armed. Officers are subject to those penalties prescribed by the F.A.A. for violations of these regulations.

### **.02 SAPD OFFICERS ENTERING THE AIRPORT PASSENGER BOARDING (SECURE) AREA**

- A. TSA regulations prohibit ANY non-ticketed person from by-passing the passenger boarding security checkpoint. This includes SAPD officers, unless they are on official business with proper authorization (i.e., execution of a warrant, prisoner transfers), credentials, and identification.
- B. SAPD officers on-duty, in uniform or plainclothes, who must enter the passenger boarding area of the San Antonio International Airport on official business, will:
  - 1. Proceed to the exit lane of the TSA Checkpoint (The lane where arriving passengers exit the secure area);
  - 2. Upon contacting the Transportation Security Officer (TSO) assigned to the exit lane Checkpoint, will identify himself/herself as an SAPD officer;
  - 3. Present their San Antonio Police Department credentials (badge and photo ID) and Government-issued photo identification to the TSO; and
  - 4. Sign in on the appropriate register.

### **.03 CARRYING WEAPONS AS A PASSENGER ON A COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT**

- A. SAPD officers are not allowed to carry any weapon on or about their person while on a commercial aircraft without a letter of authority signed by the Chief of Police. This is applicable regardless of the duty status or dress of the officer. The letter of authority must be presented to the air carrier with which the officer is traveling. This is a TSA regulatory requirement for the airlines.
- B. SAPD officers flying armed shall adhere to the following:
  - 1. Must have successfully completed the structured training program “Law Enforcement Officers Flying Armed;”
  - 2. Must have a need for a weapon to be accessible from the time he or she would otherwise check the weapon until the time it would be claimed after deplaning;



# SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



## *Procedure 613 – Carrying Weapons on Airport Property*

3. Must obtain a letter of authority signed by the Chief of Police confirming the need to travel armed and detailing the itinerary of the travel. The Department shall transmit a properly formatted message via NLETS to TSA. An Alpha-numeric identifier will be assigned for each day of travel. If an NLETS message is not on record with TSA, a weapon will not be allowed beyond the checkpoint;
4. If the dates of travel change or airport information changes, a new NLETS identifier will need to be issued. Therefore, the SAPD officer should be prepared to communicate with the Office of the Chief to have a new NLETS message sent;
5. If officer encounters a delay, exceeding twenty-four (24) hours, in his travel due to weather, airlines, mechanical, etc., the officer may contact the TSA office at the airport where he is delayed and request a new NLETS identifier. Officer must have all of his travel paperwork, itinerary, and identification ready to present to TSA;
6. Must notify the aircraft operator of the flight(s) on which he/she needs to have a weapon accessible at least one (1) hour, or in an emergency, as soon as possible before departure;
7. Identify him/herself to the aircraft operator by presenting credentials that include a clear full-face picture, the signature of the SAPD officer, the signature of the Chief of Police, and the official seal of the Police Department;
  - a. Officers should verify that their credentials contain their signature to meet the guidelines, or obtain new credentials that do meet the guidelines;
  - b. A badge may not be accepted as the sole means of identification. The officer must also present to the air carrier the original signed letter of authority to fly armed;
8. Proceed to the exit lane of the Security Checkpoint, contact the TSO assigned to the checkpoint, and identify himself as a SAPD officer;
9. Present their SAPD credentials, a second form of Government-issued photo identification, the NLETS alpha-numeric code, boarding pass, airline law enforcement officer documentation to the TSO;
10. Most airlines issue LEO flying armed documentation for those flying aboard their airline. Some airlines choose not to issue this documentation. Officers should check with the airline, at baggage check-in, and ask if the airline issues this documentation in order to board the aircraft;
11. Sign in on the appropriate register. Authority for law enforcement officers carrying a weapon beyond the Security Checkpoint is subject to the approval of TSA, regardless of all criteria being met;
12. If denied boarding the aircraft with a weapon by either TSA, airport law enforcement, or airline carrier, officers should be prepared to check their weapon (see .04); and
13. Officers are reminded that Federal Law prohibits law enforcement officers flying armed from consuming any alcohol while on board the aircraft and eight (8) hours prior to departure.

### ***.04 CARRYING WEAPONS IN BAGGAGE ON A COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT***

- A. SAPD officers who desire to transport a weapon on a commercial aircraft in their luggage must contact the air carrier well in advance to make sure they understand the procedures or if you are transporting a “shoulder weapon.”
  1. Place the weapon unloaded in a locked hard sided case. Ensure that any ammunition is in “factory” or similar packaging and does not exceed eleven (11) pounds of small arms ammunition.



## SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



### *Procedure 613 – Carrying Weapons on Airport Property*

2. At the ticket counter, advise the airline agent that you are declaring that an unloaded weapon is in a container within checked baggage.
  3. Complete the necessary forms and maintain the key or number combination to the lock box.
- B. Upon arrival at the destination, reclaim the weapon through the normal baggage process.
- C. Some airports may have the officer claim their baggage and weapon at the baggage security desk and present identification in order to verify the officer is the rightful owner of the checked baggage and weapon.

#### **.05 CARRYING WEAPONS AS A PASSENGER ESCORTING A PRISONER ON A COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT**

- A. SAPD officers who are assigned to transport a prisoner on a commercial aircraft, when making the travel arrangements will:
1. Comply with Section .03 of this procedure and Procedure 601, *Prisoners*.
  2. Advise the airline if the prisoner is a high-risk or low-risk prisoner.
    - a. High-risk prisoner means a prisoner who is an exceptional escape risk as determined by the Department, and charged with or convicted of, a violent crime.
    - b. Low-risk prisoner means any prisoner who has not been designated as a “high-risk” prisoner.
    - c. Unless authorized by the TSA, no more than one (1) high-risk prisoner may be transported on an aircraft.
  3. Notify the airlines at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the scheduled departure time that an armed SAPD officer will be transporting a prisoner.
  4. Obtain a letter of authority signed by the Chief of Police confirming the need to travel armed. The letter must:
    - a. Be addressed to the airline;
    - b. Name the SAPD officer and the identity of the prisoner;
    - c. State the city of departure and destination.
  5. Present the letter to the TSO at the exit lane prior to entering the passenger boarding area at the airport and comply with the directions and instruction of the TSO.
- B. The steps listed in Section .03A above must be followed at each location during the travel. This includes every time the SAPD officer and prisoner change planes or exit the sterile areas at the airports.